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C O N F I D E N T I A L HANOI 000310

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MLS AND EAP/K

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/02/2019

TAGS: [KN](#) [KS](#) [PARM](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: VIETNAM ON PLANNED DPRK MISSILE LAUNCH

Classified By: Political Counselor Brian Aggeler for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary and Comment: In an April 2 meeting, the MFA Americas Deputy Director General shared Vietnam's views on promoting peace and stability in Northeast Asia. He said Vietnam has approached the DPRK directly to express concerns about its planned missile launch, but did not have information on the DPRK response. The GVN does not appear to have a set position on a response to the launch, and is interested in consulting closely with the U.S. on this issue.

While it may be too much to hope that the GVN will line up with the U.S. position on this issue, at least initially, it is significant that Vietnam has taken the initiative to seek consultations. One can imagine Hanoi is making similar overtures to China and Russia, and we should be proactive in presenting the U.S. position early and at a high level. Vietnam's position as the only ASEAN country currently on the Council and its comparatively good relations with the DPRK put it in a unique position to play a constructive role. End summary and comment.

¶2. (C) At the request of MFA, on April 2 MFA Americas Deputy Director General Le Huy Hoang discussed the scheduled DPRK missile launch with PolCouns. Reading from prepared notes, Hoang said Vietnam supports efforts to promote peace and stability in Northeast Asia and shares the viewpoint of many countries that the Six-Party Talks are an important mechanism for settling differences through dialogue. The GVN is concerned over recent developments in Northeast Asia, Hoang said, and calls on all parties to exercise restraint and not take actions to exacerbate the situation. Vietnam has a consistent position against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, while upholding the right of nations to the peaceful use of nuclear power. Vietnam has shared its concerns directly with the DPRK, Hoang said, and hopes the U.S. will not make the situation more complicated.

¶3. (C) Asked what response the GVN received from the DPRK on this issue, Hoang said he did not have that information. PolCouns noted that what the DPRK calls a satellite launch is in reality a test of its Taepodong-2 long-range ballistic missile and that, as such, it would represent a clear violation of UNSCR 1718 and is inconsistent with UNSCR 1695. Hoang did not appear familiar with the resolutions and took notes.

¶4. (C) PolCouns said we have called upon the DPRK not to take this provocative action and to focus on peaceful denuclearization. Hoang said it looked like the launch would go ahead and asked about possible U.S. responses. PolCouns said it was premature to speculate on what actions the international community may take if the DPRK does go ahead with the launch, but that we anticipate working closely with Vietnam and our other Security Council partners.

¶5. (C) PolCouns noted that, as the only ASEAN country currently on the Council and as a country that enjoys good relations with the DPRK, Vietnam is in a unique position to

play a constructive role in what will likely be one of the biggest events for the Security Council this year. Hoang responded that the GVN is very interested in consulting closely on this issue, in particular through our respective missions at the UN.
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